

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE



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WASHINGTON
U. S. BOARD ON
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

E
MAPS, R-3, Lincoln
Geographic Names

October 23, 1943

The Director
U. S. Board on Geographical Names
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C.

Dear Dr. Burrill:

Reference is made to your letter of October 22 concerning certain features in New Mexico and northern Texas, those in New Mexico being located within or near the Lincoln National Forest. I am sending copies of your letter to the Regional Forester at Albuquerque, who will forward information in regard to local usages as requested. Meanwhile I have checked my own knowledge in regard to these matters by consultation with other men in the Forest Service who know the section of the country involved and feel certain the following preliminary answers to some of your questions are correct:

Question a. The Guadalupe Mountains are unquestionably distinct and are not meant to be included, in local usages, when the term "Sacramento Mountains" is used. The Guadalupe Mountains lie well to the southeast of the crest of the Sacramento Mountains and apparently represent a distinct geologic formation from the fault line along the crest of the Sacramentos. The Guadalupe Mts. lack the long eastern slope of the Sacramentos. There is a broad area of relatively low country between the two mountain ranges, which low country one man familiar with the region has described to me in broad terms as "semi-desert," meaning that the elevation is insufficient to give a precipitation which will support any considerable quantity of tree growth.

Question b. As indicated on the 1941 map of the Lincoln National Forest, the term "Sacramento Mountains" appears to be limited in most local usage to the crest and slopes south of the Rio Tularosa. The very steep western escarpment and the much more gradual slope to the east from the crest typical of the Sacramento Mountains directly east of Alamogordo is much less prominent as one goes north to about altitude 33°10'. You will probably already have noted that this latest map of the Lincoln National Forest carries Sierra Blanca and Jicarilla Mountain as the names of individual mountains without the use of these names as applying to any range or group. I can speak personally to the effect that the term "Sacramento Mountains" was not applied to the ridges and mountains north of the road and railroad from Carrizozo to Capitan, New Mexico, in

1909, and the men with whom I have consulted tell me that they do not know of any such extension of the application of Sacramento Mountains. The information now available to me is less definite with reference to the mountains and peaks north of the western flowing Rio Tularosa and the eastern flowing Rio Ruidoso than in the case of Guadalupe Mountains, except of course that Capitan Mountains form a distinct mountain ridge northeast of Fort Stanton and that ridge has never been considered part of the Sacramento Mountains.

Question e. Unquestionably Guadalupe Mountains have sufficient identity to warrant an individual name. The same is true of Sacramento Mountains. As indicated above I am by no means sure whether or not Jicarilla Mountains deserve that name or any other separate name and am still more uncertain about Sierra Blanca as applied to more than a single mountain.

Question d. Spanish pronunciations are given locally for Guadalupe Mountains and for at least Jicarilla Mountain.

Question e. As previously stated, there is a definite topographic break between Sacramento Mountains and Guadalupe Mountains. In practice the relatively low passes traversed by the roads and railroad as above mentioned would seem to give definite topographic breaks between the ranges for which Jicarilla Mountain and Sierra Blanca have sometimes been used and between the Sierra Blanca and the Sacramento Mountains.

With reference to Jicarilla, may I point out that in New Mexico the term is usually associated with areas in the northern part of the State, such as the Jicarilla Indian Reservation adjacent to the Colorado state line.

With reference to Sierra Blanca, there is considerable local use of the English equivalent, White Mountain. For example, our Ranger District covering this vicinity is listed as the White Mountain Ranger District.

Sincerely yours,

LYLE F. WATTS, Chief

By  Acting
E. E. CARTER